

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 15 and 17 and cancel claims 9-11 and 16 as shown in the following listing of claims. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Presented) In a local area communications network having a communication channel, a host computer, an access point, and a portable terminal, wherein the portable terminal has the capability to enter a sleep mode when not transmitting or receiving, and the access point periodically transmits synchronization messages, a method used by the portable terminal for gaining access to the communication network, comprising:

- (a) waking up when data is available for transmission to the host computer;
- (b) waiting for a first predetermined time in order to receive a synchronization message from the access point;
- (c) sensing the communications channel for a second predetermined time to determine if the channel is busy;
- (d) transmitting a request for poll to the access point if the channel is clear for the second predetermined time; and
- (e) if the channel is busy during the second predetermined time, repeating operation (b).

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein said first predetermined time is greater than or equal to the time between synchronization messages minus the maximum interpoll gap time.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein said second predetermined fixed time is greater than or equal to the maximum interpoll gap time.

15. (currently amended) A method used by a sending device for beginning a data exchange over an RF communication link with a polling device, wherein the polling device has an interpoll gap time, comprising:

~~identifying that the RF communication link is clear throughout a period which is at least as long as the interpoll gap time~~

(a) generating a pseudo-random number corresponding to a first pseudo-random time which is at least as long as the interpoll gap time;

(b) sensing a channel for a time substantially shorter than the first pseudo-random time;

(c) repeating operation (b) until the channel is detected as being busy, or the channel is detected as being clear at every sense until the first pseudo-random time is reached;

(d) if the channel is detected as being busy, executing a second pseudo-random time delay back-off and returning to operation (a); and

(e) if the channel has been detected as being clear for the entire first pseudo-random time period, transmitting a request for poll frame.

16. (cancelled)

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 46 15 wherein operation (d) further comprises incrementing a retry counter and testing said retry counter such that a second pseudo-random back-off and retry will not be performed if said retry counter is above a predetermined threshold value.

18-20. (cancelled)